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133 of a barberry (Berberis axifolia), called by the Chilians calafate, and also saw plenty of the red and white tea-berries, so common in the Falklands, we entered a wide plain or valley, at the farther end of which rose a peculiar pointed hill, one of a range that stretched away east and west, pierced by a pass. In the midst of it a huge square flat rock shone white in the sunlight, forming a striking object: it looked like a megalith, deposited by giants to cover the grave of some deceased hero. Others of less dimensions lay strewn here and there, giving somewhat of a graveyard aspect to the scene. As we advanced the ground was encumbered with rocks and scoriæ, lying in heaps in all directions, making it very difficult travelling for the horses, and on arriving at the hills themselves their appearance was decidedly volcanic. The whole immediate vicinity of this range of hills presented a peculiarly wild, blasted, and weird appearance; nevertheless ostriches and guanaco were observable in great quantities. My first thought on passing one hill, where, among the other fantastic forms into which the rocks had been tossed, was a natural corral, or circle of huge fragments, built with apparent regularity, but of superhuman dimensions, was, 'What a hell this must have been when the volcanoes were in an active state, belching out the streams of lava and showers of rock, and that perhaps at no distant period!' While at Santa Cruz, Casimiro told me of an active volcano situated at a distance and in a direction which would fix it as belonging to this range. Formerly its neighbourhood had been frequented by the Indians, as the guanaco resorted thither in great numbers during the winter; but the Indians' horses most of them had been poisoned by
133 drinking the water of a stream close to the range, and soon
731 after all the toldos were shaken down by an earthquake or the vibration of an explosion, and since then they had not ventured to go near the place. Casimiro and Gonzalez had, however, subsequently ascended the volcano, and had killed numbers of guanaco in the neighbourhood. It was also

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mentioned that when they were encamped on the Cuheyli, or Coy Inlet River, tremendous volumes of thick black smoke, rolling from the west, enveloped the Indians and terrified them exceedingly. No signs were afterwards found of burned pasture, and it was conjectured that the Canoe Indians of the Chonos Archipelago had fired the western forests, but it was much more likely to have been due to volcanic eruption. While trotting along the defile through these hills formed by a chasm, with perpendicular walls of rock rising on each hand, as evenly scraped as the sides of a railway cutting, I observed several caves, which J'aria had a tradition the Indians formerly used as dwelling-places. This pass led into another valley still more rugged, and strewn with sharp angular fragments of rock, amongst which stunted shrubs began to appear; and lagoons, some of which were encrusted round the edges with saltpetre, and contained brackish water, might be seen at intervals. Towards evening we encamped by the side of a small lagoon of circular form with wall-like cliffs rising some 200 feet from its banks, and nearly surrounding it. I took a stroll, rifle in hand, whilst the men were getting firewood; and plenty guanaco were visible, but I only succeeded in wounding one, which escaped on three legs. Traces of puma, in the shape of carrion, were also there, but Leon himself was hidden. So I returned empty-handed to the fire, where I found a cheerful supper of wild duck and guanaco meat just ready. The moon was beautiful, and the air just frosty enough to be bracing and exhilarating, so some of us staid smoking and spinning yarns until the small hours. The stories were chiefly of adventures on the Pampas. José narrated how, when in pursuit of a party of runaways in the depth of winter, when the snow lay thick on the ground, he and his comrade rode into a valley where countless guanaco had taken refuge from the storm in the upper heights, and stood huddled together, too benumbed by the cold to attempt to escape, and were slaughtered like oxen in the shambles. In

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502 gation, made them so liable to mischief, that it seemed wise to prepare for it; and I at once began ingratiating myself with two of the worst fellows in the whole tribe, by professions of special good will and admiration for them, and confidential hints that they would share more liberally in the bounties of "Holland" than any of their fellows. Whilst thus engaged, with cautious glances across the river, to make sure that all was right, I perceived that there was quite a commotion among the people below; some were springing upon their horses, — others, ready mounted, were dashing furiously down the bank. On looking some distance below, a boat appeared to be in distress; the lariat that bound it together had snapped asunder, and the pressure within, and the strain of the horse without, had broken the front stake; the horse, relieved of his freight, pulled for the shore, and could neither be coaxed nor beaten into a return to duty. The horsemen on the banks dashed into the stream, and swam for the wreck, which contained, among other passengers, a young child. It was already filled with water, and was partially turned on her side. The surface of the river was dotted with dark forms, struggling with the mad current; one horseman after another each grasped a floating object, and made for the shore. The craft had drifted nearly half a mile, and nothing could be made out very distinctly. The squaws, on first perceiving the mischance, watched the [533] wreck, and sung in a loud and plaintive strain, all the while casting unfriendly glances at me, and gradually approaching the place where I stood. My apprehensions were so far confirmed by this movement, that I told John (the name I gave one of my present particular friends),

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as he loved rum and tobacco, and expected to get any, not to leave me. John saw at a glance what was in the wind, and appreciated both the immediate danger and the ultimate reward of averting it; namely, the privilege of being gloriously drunk at my expense. He told me to go into his hut, and pointed me to the furthest corner; where, I being duly ensconced, he took his station, cutlass in hand, directly in front of me. The singing grew louder, and the voices more numerous about the door; the song was their regular powwow strain, which invariably preluded the killing of a horse. The Indians began to enter the lodge, and looked unutterable things in the direction where I was crouching; the wigwam was soon filled with them, and they were beginning to crowd towards me, when old John opened upon them, and told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves, to come in there in that manner; they did not even know what had happened, — they did not know whether any lives were lost. They were threatening on account of the death of a child, when, for aught they knew, the child was alive; they had better wait patiently, till they knew more about the matter, before they made any further uproar about it. In this strain he parleyed with them for some time, till they concluded to retire, uttering, as they went, the most horrible sounds. I felt less relief from their absence than if John had not, by implication, fully assented that *if* the brat was drowned, my life should answer for it. News soon came that the children were all safe, but that the boat was lost.

An instant change ensued: the fire appeared to be quenched, but I feared it might break out at any moment afresh. Knowing their treachery, I kept a pretty sus-